

PORTLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE

# ***ILLUMINATION PROJECT***

# ***STUDY GUIDE***

***SPRING 2021***





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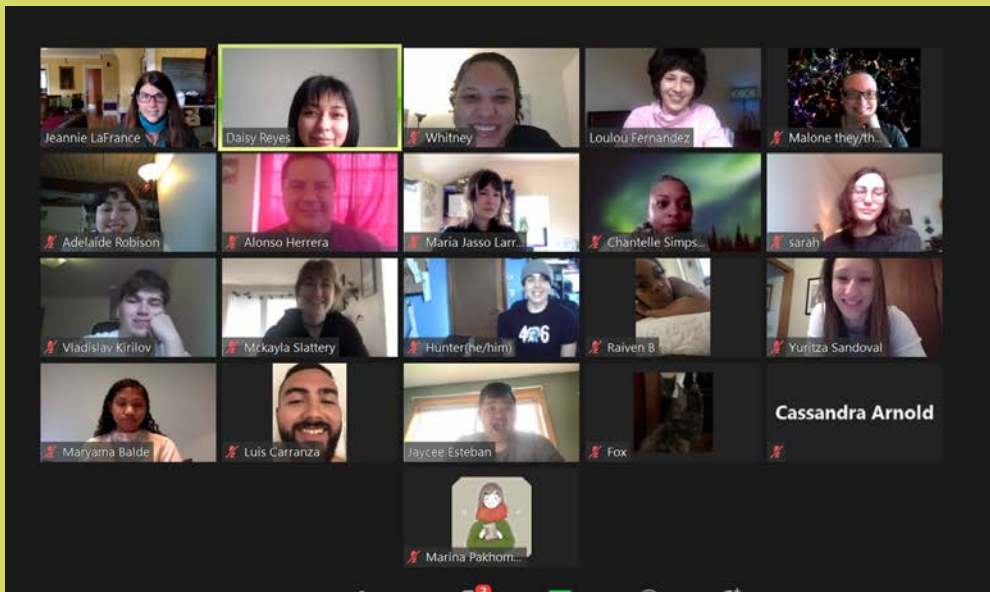
# WHAT IS THE ILLUMINATION PROJECT?



The Illumination Project (IP) is Portland Community College's innovative, nationally lauded student leadership and social justice theater program. The IP is designed to address issues of equity and inclusion and to foster a climate of belonging, compassion, and respect for all people in the PCC community.

The Illumination Project has a dual purpose. First the project provides participating students with an opportunity to learn about social justice issues and interactive theater and develop skills as educators, actors, activists, and leaders. These students then educate other students, staff and faculty audiences to confront stereotypes, teach conflict negotiation and promote racial, gender, and economic equity.

Each year the Student Educators write six distinct plays addressing issues such as racism, immigration, classism, gender based violence, and heterosexism. The play topics focus on how these issues impact students' educational experiences and brainstorm solutions for taking action against social oppression.



The plays produced by the IP are generated from situations the Student Educators have experienced in our own lives. We also create all of the promotional and educational materials for the plays. We hope the audience enjoys and participates in our plays, but more importantly that we all learn something.



# ***PLAY DESCRIPTIONS***

## ***SPRING 2021***

### ***It's Just Our Policy***

A young black woman, Alex , and her mother try to navigate anti blackness in the workforce and education, in Alex's final week of community college.

### ***Being Here***

Two Latinx friends struggle to keep their work and school lives on track, in the midst of daily hardships, workplace discrimination, and the heartbreak of family separation and deportation.

### ***Para Siempre***

The Gutierrez sisters navigate racism and generational trauma in Portland, as their internal and external environments collide and permeate into one another.





# PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE



<b>Wednesday April 28th</b>	<b>Being Here</b>	<b>2:00PM - 3:50PM</b>
<b>Monday May 3rd</b>	<b>It's Just Our Policy</b>	<b>3:00PM - 4:50PM</b>
<b>Tuesday May 4th</b>	<b>Para Siempre</b>	<b>10:00AM - 11:50AM</b>
<b>Wednesday May 5th</b>	<b>Being Here</b>	<b>10:00AM - 11:50AM</b>
<b>Thursday May 6th</b>	<b>Para Siempre</b>	<b>1:00PM - 2:50PM</b>
<b>Friday May 7th</b>	<b>It's Just Our Policy</b>	<b>9:00 AM - 10:50 AM</b>
<b>Tuesday May 11th</b>	<b>Para Siempre</b>	<b>1:00 - 2:50 PM</b>
<b>Wednesday May 12th</b>	<b>It's Just Our Policy</b>	<b>2:00PM - 3:50PM</b>
<b>Thursday May 13th</b>	<b>Being Here</b>	<b>3:00PM - 4:50PM</b>
<b>Monday May 17th</b>	<b>It's Just Our Policy</b>	<b>9:00AM - 10:50AM</b>
<b>Tuesday May 18th</b>	<b>Being Here</b>	<b>3:00 - 4:50 PM</b>
<b>Wednesday May 19th</b>	<b>Para Siempre</b>	<b>11:00AM - 12:50PM</b>
<b>Thursday May 20th</b>	<b>Para Siempre</b>	<b>11:00 AM - 12:50 PM</b>

To sign up for free, live virtual performances, please fill-out the form at [www.pcc.edu/illumination/](http://www.pcc.edu/illumination/)

Accessibility arrangements: Disability Services  
[disability.services@pcc.edu](mailto:disability.services@pcc.edu)

For more information: Jeannie LaFrance [jlafranc@pcc.edu](mailto:jlafranc@pcc.edu)



# STUDENT EDUCATORS



**ADDIE**

Hi! My name is Adelaide or Addie. I grew up in a tiny Oregon town, being one of the few non-white students. I witnessed and experienced injustices, discrimination, and hate all throughout my childhood. We can and need to do better. The Illumination Project is a step towards bettering humanity, and I'm so happy to be a part of it!

My name is Alonso Herrera. I joined IP to help myself better understand the problems in all corners and micro cracks of racism. For me to understand is better for me to help other people and also to become a better version of me. The hurt and destruction it causes and trail of fire it produces is not humane. We're not suppose to behave like this. I think the youth today are doing a very good job by standing up and staying woke!! I enjoy sports and being able to be free to go anywhere I want. I love meeting new people and talking with them. Although I have bouts of shyness, I squeeze through!! I had a rough life until 12 yrs ago when I needed to make a change. And I haven't looked back. I love life and being able to help is amazing! I give all the glory to my Creator!!



**ALONSO**



**DAISY**

I've never known much about social justice so i was really excited to join the illumination project to educate not only myself but others as well. I love how understanding, supporting, and guiding my peers are, along with my wonderful teacher and assistant coordinators. I have learned a lot through the illumination project and I can't wait to guide others on social justice in the future.



I am overjoyed to take part in PCC's Illumination Project and to take the skills I learn in our social justice work into my community and beyond. Over the summer of 2020, the need for protests for Black Lives and the response to them made it painfully clear how much more work we must do. I am humbled to be endlessly learning, and I welcome the challenges we face moving forward to align our nation's promises with its practices through meaningful change.



## HALEY



Hi my name is Haley and I identify as a cis-woman who is pansexual, Jewish, and white/Native American. I grew up in a multicultural household since the age of 9 when my stepdad, an immigrant from México, became a part of the family. My passions lie in helping people, and uplifting humanity. I'm majoring in social work with a minor in women and gender studies, and I'm hoping to become a licensed clinical social worker (and maybe get a PhD in Sociology someday). I am more thankful for being a part of the Illumination Project, and I appreciate all the wonderful people I got to meet.

## HUNTER

I am an aspiring personal trainer and physical instructor focusing on body positivity and kindness to oneself. Passionate about social justice. Trying my best to contribute to society in a positive way.





**JAYCEE**



I am a second generation immigrant here in America from the Philippines. I am a father of 5 beautiful daughters and husband to the love of my life! I am a combat veteran of the United States Army. I joined the Illumination Project because I believe everybody deserves the same rights and equal opportunities. It sucks that after all I have done and sacrificed for my country I still get told I do not belong here because of the color of my skin. With having mixed children, I want them to know that it is okay to be different and be able to walk around together without being made fun of or accused of not being “real” sisters because they are all different colors from each other.

Kamila is awesome.

**KAMILA**



**LOULOU**



I am a first generation American of Dominican, Puerto Rican, Spanish, and Italian descent. Excavating, examining, and healing ancestral trauma through self-awareness, accountability, and trauma-informed social justice approaches is a passion of mine. I believe that studying history, society, and communities from a decolonized perspective allows us to identify structures of systemic oppression, and understand our individual roles in perpetuating harmful ideologies and white supremacy as a whole. I joined the Illumination Project to further my own accountability for positions I play in these systems, and support those looking to understand their place both consciously and unconsciously within them, too. Deeply grateful for the opportunity to share space with each of the individuals involved with this program, those who are here to participate, and for the kindness and humanity we offer to one another during the process.



My passion is to help people, travel and learn new cultures. I'm in the Illumination Project because I believe that everyone deserves equal economic, political, and social rights and opportunities. Social justice also places a personal duty on each of us to collaborate with others to design and improve our institutions as resources for personal and social development. The Illumination Project promotes fairness and equality and students learn to view current and historical events, as well as their own actions, through the lens of social justice over time. They are able to detect prejudice and inequality. All of this contributes to stronger decision-making.



After many years of not knowing who I am or what I want to do in my life, I finally realized that I'm a do-gooder. I've always felt that if something is worth doing then it is worth doing well -- or as well as you can. So, I'm here on my journey to learn how to be the best do-gooder/accomplice/ ally/ human that I can be. Also, fun. I really like fun. Theater is fun.

I am a first gen Xicanx/Latinx-American, an Early Childhood Education major, and a toddler/preschool teacher. My passions include early learning, child, family, immigrant and community advocacy, music, & the arts. Social justice has always been important to me because it recognizes our need to fight for equitable policy, access, and equal rights in our society, and calls us to action as community members that have accountable roles in that change. I joined the Illumination Project because I value the learning that comes from community-building around social issues, perspective sharing, and honoring each other's personal experiences and stories. I believe that in working together for social change, we have the potential to make the world a better place for everyone.





**MCKAYLA**

I'm passionate about social justice because without it, we will never progress as a caring and empathetic society. The Illumination Project has been for me the education I wish everyone could receive. My favorite hobbies and pastimes are boxing, art, writing, getting involved with my community, exploring new places, and playing with my little rat terrier. I hope to graduate with a degree in social work so I can help children and teenagers who grow up in the foster care system



**RAIVEN**



I am an art major with a strong passion to fight for what's right. I create some of my most meaningful pieces under the pain and oppression myself and others have experienced. Throughout my life I've always had the urge to be better and do better, what better way to do that than being a part of the illumination project?

**SAM**



Sam is awesome.



A portrait of Sarah, a young woman with long brown hair, wearing a dark jacket over a light-colored sweater. She is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background shows a beach and the ocean under a cloudy sky.

**SARAH**

My name is Sarah. It feels like my whole life has been spent questioning the world around me, particularly the structures which perpetuate ignorance and/or harm. As a 7th generation white American, I am determined to understand the how the culture and history of the colonizers of this land (my ancestors) created and upheld the oppressive and exploitive systems in place today. I'm grateful to get to be part of these plays—to help tell stories, participate in conversations, and work toward a better future for everyone.

I really like it when there is peace and friendship in our community. But, sometimes there are problems and injustices in our society. That's why I joined the IP to work for a solution.

A portrait of Vlad, a young man with short dark hair, wearing a dark puffer jacket. He is smiling and standing outdoors. The background shows a body of water, a railing, and some buildings in the distance under a clear blue sky.

**VLAD**

Hi! I'm a Human Resources Management major who as a Black woman, cares deeply about diversity, equity and working to dismantle systemic oppression. I've learned so many important foundational tools from being a part of IP and I'm passionate about sharing my experience as a student educator as well as learning from others while using Theatre of the Oppressed as a road forward, toward change.

A portrait of Whitney, a Black woman with a large, curly afro hairstyle, wearing sunglasses and a yellow jacket. She is smiling and sitting in a car, with a seatbelt visible. The background is slightly blurred, showing the interior of the car.

**WHITNEY**



I am an African American Studies and Film major, who is passionate about social justice through art. I am originally from Oakland, California, one of the epicenters of art and activism. The Illumination Project has been a wonderful opportunity to combine these interests in tackling issues that have personally affected me and my community. I'm thrilled to be a part of a project that encourages change through empathy and education.

## YASMYNN



I've always been passionate about social justice work and educating those around me on how to be a better ally. I joined the Illumination Project to work with like-minded peers, further my education on social issues, and learn how to be a student educator by gaining tools to share what I've learned. I love that IP brings people together to help educate each other, and facilitates a safe space to do so. The community built in this class is so refreshing, and the kindness and patience extended to everyone so that we can grow and do better is so amazing.

I am a Mexican immigrant who was born in Jalisco, Mexico. One of the things I am passionate about, is the cultural diversity in our society. I love and appreciate the uniqueness of every culture and race around the world. A personal goal of mine, is to contribute something positive to society, whether it would be making my environment a better place or bringing equal rights to everyone. I am very excited about sharing my experience as a student educator because the Illumination project has inspired me to use my privilege to speak for others.





# ASSISTANT COORDINATORS



## CASSANDRA

This is my 3rd year at PCC and my 2nd year with IP. I am a (legally) Blind student studying Psychology to be a Disability Counselor. During my time with The Illumination Project, learned how to best use my privileges and also how to advocate for myself and my community.

## MARINA

This year I am graduating PCC with ASS in Paraeducation. I am planning on working as a teacher assistant in ESL classroom, while getting my bachelor's degree. My family moved from Russia around 10 years ago and it was challenging time for my parents and me to find community and opportunities. Illumination Project is a place where I am always welcomed and learn more about people and ongoing issues of discrimination, how complex our society is.







# WHAT WE USUALLY DO



Typically the Illumination Project performs live interactive plays based on a style of theater called Theater of the Oppressed. We perform on all four PCC campuses and off campus as well. The plays are written by the students in the program and are based on their lived experiences.

The plays are short - 10 to 15 minutes long. In the play we present a problem around inequity or discrimination (this spring term 2021 the topic is racism). During our performances the play is performed once without interruption. We do not solve the problem in the play.

The first run through of the play is called the "anti-model" because the protagonist loses, the antagonist wins, and the potential allies are ineffective.

We perform the play again. This time the audience can say "stop" when they see the problem happening. An audience member then comes on stage and takes the place of a character they feel could make a positive difference in the situation. This is called an "intervention."

The audience member tries something out, the actors still on stage improvise in character and then the audience member sits down.

Sometimes the intervention works, sometimes it does not. We dialogue with the audience and actors about how the intervention went. Then a new audience member tries a different intervention with the same character or a new character and so on and so on...

This spring term 2021 we will be performing on Zoom. We are excited to work in this new format, using theater as a tool for social justice and connection.







## **WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO**

The Illumination Project uses theater as way of promoting dialogue and action around issues of systemic discrimination. There are lots of ways of working toward social justice. Theater is one of them.

We believe that all of us can play a part in making PCC and our whole community a place where everyone feels welcomed and included. It can be hard to figure out what to do when problems around injustice or discrimination occur.

Sometimes, the problems are so deeply ingrained in our society, that it feels overwhelming. Sometimes, it can happen so quickly, that we are stunned or so upset we end up not doing anything at all. Or, it comes from our friends and family, and we are worried about losing relationships. There are thousands of reasons why it can be difficult to intervene in oppression.



## **WHAT WOULD YOU DO?**

These plays are a unique opportunity to interact with situations that are real (they happened in lives of our Student Educators ) but that are not actually happening right now. It helps to put some good thinking, acting and writing into how you might intervene, if this happened in the future.

We do not have the answers and we are not trying to tell others what to do. We are showing the problem and seeing what our audience comes up with. The greatest learning we have all year is from all the different strategies the audience members use to solve the problems in our plays.



# GENERAL QUESTIONS FOR THE PLAYS

1. What are some examples of racism in the play?
2. How does racism intersect with other forms of oppression (classism, sexism, ableism etc.) in the play?
3. What is the impact on the characters when there is intersectionality between two or more oppressions?
5. What are some of the social institutions (education, media, criminal justice, economic etc.) represented in the play?
6. How do these institutions promote or uphold systems of racism and xenophobia in the play? What is the impact on individual characters? Think about how all the characters are impacted, not only the protagonist.
7. Describe some of the examples of privilege from the play.
8. Do some characters have an easier time being believed than others?
10. Which of these scenarios have you not experienced or noticed? How could your own privilege contribute to that?
11. Theater of the Oppressed plays are called “anti-models.” This means the first run through of the play always ends with the main character(s) “losing.” What did the main character(s) lose? Please be detailed.



# QUESTIONS FOR SPECIFIC PLAYS

## *Being Here*

1. What are some examples of microaggressions towards Oscar ? What are examples of microaggressions toward Marta?
2. Why do you think Oscar goes to the cookout despite what his boss said to him earlier in the play?
3. What are some instances of victim blaming throughout the play?
4. What are some examples of white fragility within the play. Especially regarding Britney and Chaz.
5. How does the racism in the play impact Marta and Oscar's education??

## *It's Just Our Policy*

1. Can a person who studies social justice still be racist and behave with bias? Think about your reasoning.
2. How does the bystander effect impact people of color in more detrimental ways than white people?
3. Where in the play could bystanders have intervened to have improved the outcome?
4. What steps can people in powerful positions take to recognize their own biases? Use examples from the play to illustrate your ideas.
5. What were the main examples of racism and aggressive bias towards Alex? How would things be different if she was white?

## *Para Siempre*

1. Why is the message on the T-shirt upsetting to Bobbi and Carmen?
2. How do you think Doug's attitude impacts Carmen and Bobbi ?
3. How is conformity tied to racism - how is that shown in this play?
4. How do favoritism and racism intertwine?
5. How does the teacher's implicit bias affect how she interprets the situation between Estrella and Sally?



# WHAT IS "THEATER OF THE OPPRESSED"?

Theater of the Oppressed is a form of theatre that gives communities opportunities to confront systemic oppression head-on. Developed by Augusto Boal, unlike a typical play, Theater of the Oppressed relies on audience participation, rather than the actors, as its driving force. The audience must be willing to join the actors on stage, attempting to intervene in scenes, be ok with making mistakes, and directly interact with the characters and the play in order to try changing the outcome of the scene for the better.



Augusto Boal ([thehero](#)).



Augusto Boal giving a workshop ([thehero](#)).

Augusto Boal was a Brazilian theater director, politician, and actor. He studied Chemical Engineering and theater at Columbia University, where thereafter he was hired to work at the Arena Theater of Sao Paulo. Boal was the artistic director from 1956 until 1971, where he would start experimenting with forms of theatre to help empower the oppressed. He was first inspired by Paulo Freire, from his book *Pedagogia do Oprimido* (Pedagogy of the Oppressed), a text regarded as fundamental to the birth of critical pedagogy, which is a philosophy of teaching and education that treats the acts of education and learning in themselves as ultimately acts of social justice.



**Want to become a Student Educator?**

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# THE ILLUMINATION PROJECT

**Become a Student Educator  
with PCC's interactive social  
justice theater program!**

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